



**SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP  
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESS AVAILABILITY**

**Full Transcript, including Prepared Statements and  
Q&A with Canadian, U.S. and Mexican officials**

**OTTAWA, June 27, 2005**

MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us at today's press conference.

(Interpreted): We welcome you to this press conference on the SPP. Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan today met with Michael Chertoff, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security; Carlos Gutierrez, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce; His Excellency Fernando Canales, Mexican Secretary of the Economy; and His Excellency Carlos Abascal, Mexican Secretary of the Interior, to report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America.

Following the brief statements from each Minister and Secretary, there will be an opportunity for questions from members of the media who are here today. Following this question and answer session, Ministers and Secretaries will participate in a signing ceremony and photo opportunity prior to departing.

We will be beginning in just a few moments. Thank you very much.

Pause

MODERATOR: Please be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and the Minister Responsible for Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America.  
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Deputy Prime Minister, the Honourable Anne McLellan: Thank you. Thank you very much. Merçi. Bonjour mesdames et messieurs. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to open this briefing on the Security and Prosperity Partnership and the progress, considerable progress that our three countries have made to date. It is a pleasure for me and my colleague, the Honourable David Emerson, the Minister of Industry, to host our counterparts here in our Nation's Capital.

Let me introduce quickly Michael Chertoff, U.S Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary Carlos Abascal, Mexican Secretary of the Interior; Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, U.S. Secretary of Commerce; and Fernando Canales, Mexican Secretary of Trade and Economic Development. Welcome to all of you on behalf of the Government of Canada.

(Interpreted from French): Prime Minister Martin, President Bush and President Fox initiated the creation of this partnership during their meeting of the 23rd of March at Waco, Texas. By announcing this initiative, the three leaders called upon their Ministers Responsible to establish a report in the following days on the work plans to establish the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America to improve the quality of life and prosperity of the citizens of North America.

With today's announcement we are setting out over 300 specific concrete milestones in our work plans. I congratulate the many people from our three countries who have been working hard on this plan.

Within the security agenda we have three overarching themes that are mutually reinforcing. They relate to how we secure North America from external threats, how we prevent and respond to threats within North America, and the third focuses on improving the flow of legitimate trade and travel within North America.

To better secure North America from external threats, our three countries are now committed to implementing compatible standards to better screen out high-risk individuals and cargo before they leave and depart a foreign port destined for North America.

Some specific initiatives include testing biometric technology and screening travelers, developing benchmarks on visa issues, and developing a coordinated strategy on threats to our food supply and agricultural sectors.

To prevent and to respond to threats within North America, we will be implementing a comprehensive North American approach to strengthening Maritime and aviation security, including comparable standards and procedures for screening aviation passengers, hold baggage and cargo. We will also be working to help ensure the resumption of business following a major incident impacting border operations.

To further streamline the secure movement of low-risk traffic, our agencies are developing a border facilitation plan that will build capacity and improve the flow of legitimate trade and travel.

Working with stakeholders in Windsor and Detroit, we have recently made improvements in traffic flows through the Windsor-Detroit 25 Per Cent Challenge. We will examine extending the 25 Per Cent Challenge to other land border crossings so as to reduce transit times at other key locations.

We will streamline existing programs, such as the FAST program at ports of entry, and devise a single integrated global enrolment program for North American trusted travelers such as those in the FAST, NEXUS and SENTRY Programs.

Finally, we will complete negotiations of a formal Canada-U.S. Land Pre-Clearance Agreement. With a view to that, we have identified a second site for the Canada-U.S. Land Pre-Clearance Pilot Program.

I am confident that our three countries will now meet the challenge of moving from commitments to accomplishments. This will require the continued engagement of not only Secretary Chertoff, Secretary Abascal and myself, and of our respective departments and agencies, but also the involvement of stakeholders and the private sector, many of whom are here today from our three countries. On behalf of all of us, I thank you for being here with us today.

In closing, let me be clear: Our governments fully understand the importance of security and Smart Borders for our economic competitiveness and the safety of our citizens. We have done a lot to date on those fronts, with Smart Border programs and major investments and security. We want to take that to the next level and together, with today's work plans and announcements, I believe that we will.

Again, thank you all for being here today. I think, if I might say so in concluding my formal comments, that President Bush, President Fox and Prime Minister Martin in Waco gave the six of us a very ambitious agenda in terms of a timeframe of 90 days to report to our leaders.

I believe that you have received the report. I think it speaks to the outstanding work that has been done by officials in our three countries. We, as Ministers, came together today to review that work and to renew our commitment at the highest political level to ensure that that which you find in that report becomes reality and improves the quality of life for all our citizens in our three great countries.

Thank you very much for being here today. Merçi beaucoup.

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SECRETARY CHERTOFF: Thank you, Deputy Prime Minister, for introducing us, and thank you also for hosting us all here as we continue the progress that was first set forth in our meeting in Texas three months ago.

We, as three countries, really are three friends living in the same neighborhood. So we have a common interest in our mutual security and our mutual prosperity. As the Deputy Prime Minister said, we are really working to several common goals as part of this program. We want to confront external threats; we want to prevent and respond to threats within North America; and we want to facilitate the flow of traffic across our borders.

In this sense, security and prosperity are not inconsistent. In fact, they are complementary. The more secure our region is, the more our prosperity will flourish and the easier our flow of goods, services and people will be. Of course, without prosperity and the ease of movement there is no point in having security, because we want not only to protect our lives but to protect our way of life.

I'm not going to review all the accomplishments that are contained in this very, I think, handsome book here, which is quite detailed about what we have already done and what we are setting out to continue to do. But I do want to talk about three parts of the initiative we are currently taking in the security area.

First, we have agreed to develop and implement comparable methods of screening individuals as well as goods and cargo. We talk about biometrics, we talk about secure documentation. The vision is eventually to have a common theory of how we screen to make sure dangerous people and dangerous cargo do not enter our waterways, our airways or our land areas.

Second, we want to encourage the development of a unified trusted traveler approach to security. We now have NEXUS, we have SENTRY, we have FAST. All of these are ways in which people can enroll in a program that will allow them to move rapidly and conveniently between and among our countries, inside of North America and outside of North America, with a single set of documents that will be a common standard for making sure that the people can be trusted. Again, that is an initiative which can lead not only to increase security, but to increase convenience and to increase privacy for all of our citizens.

Finally, we are working together to develop a collective approach to protecting our infrastructure. We share an awful lot. We share electricity, we share waterpower, we share a food system and we have to protect them all. Part of what we are trying to do here is to make sure we have a common theory of protection, a common ability to talk across borders, to take the steps necessary to preserve and protect our important infrastructure, and also to make sure that if, God forbid, we have to respond to some kind of an emergency, we can work together in a compatible and convenient fashion in having that response.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership reflects the strength of our trade and economic relationships within North America. An important part of that is the private sector. So we have been working with private stakeholders in a vital way as we put together the initiatives we have achieved today and those that we intend to achieve going forward.

Our end state is this, our desired end state is this: We want to have a smarter set of security initiatives; we want to have a safer set of security initiatives; and we want to have a more convenient set of security initiatives.

So, with that, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues here and I want to welcome our newest colleague, Secretary Abascal from Mexico.

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EXCELLENCY ABASCAL (Interpreted from Spanish): Thank you very much, Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan, for your kind and warm hospitality. Thank you very much, Michael, for your welcome, as the person responsible for Homeland Security for the United States. Distinguished Ministers, ladies and gentleman:

For me it is a particular honor to be here, to be present with the other leaders of Mexico, United States and Canada. Our three leaders, President Fox, President Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin have signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. This has developed more rapidly than what was established in NAFTA.

Others have already preceded me and they have spoken very well, but I would like to make a number of references.

Recent history has reminded us that security in each of our three countries and in the region as a whole is an imperative necessity for ensuring in an efficient manner the prosperity of our citizens and families.

From this perspective, it must be understood that the international agenda has a deep impact on national agendas. We face a shift in world alliances and the realignment on the particular agendas of the nation states, Canada, Mexico and the United States; and they have not been absent from these transfer formations.

Considering this new paradigm, we are called to share security policies and responsibilities in order to jointly face the threats which arise from terrorism and transnational organized crime.

It must be recognized that this is not the first Accord that we have signed with respect to security. For example, we have Smart Borders between Canada and the United States and the border alliance between Mexico and our neighbor to the north.

With respect to this last Accord, institutionalization of the working relationship between the departments of the two countries has been achieved such that we trust the spirit of continuity in the bilateral cooperation will be sustained and will also be extended through our trilateral relationship.

The SPP, without doubt, allows us within an integrated framework, enhanced security, prosperity and development for the citizens of our three countries. I recognize in this document two virtues that are important to be mentioned.

The first consists of, in its discussion of matters of security in particular, a consideration for the differences and asymmetries of the three countries. We are very fortunate to be able to easily move between working on bilateral and trilateral levels.

Second, it is clear to me that there exists a very serious and mature effort to achieve accessible realistic and concrete compromises. In the security agenda, without doubt, we have encountered mechanisms to make concrete the short, medium and long-term solutions to our obstacles.

With the signing of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, many of our common concerns experience ebbs and flows. Canada, the United States and Mexico share today many more common solutions, economically, socially, and particularly with respect to our regional security which has a history of only four years.

Today, the relationship between our three countries has never been so close, so necessary and so important to our solidarity. Never has it been so important to walk down the path of institutionalization of our relationship under the principles of shared responsibility and deep respect for sovereignty and the legal framework of each country. It is possible for us to find the long-lasting and viable solutions for our future that we are looking for.

Today it is especially desirable to perfect with a common understanding our vision and our common proposal for constructing solutions with respect and clarity and understanding our differences in the space that we share that is North America.

Thank you very much.

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SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: Thank you and good afternoon.

I want to thank once again the Deputy Prime Minister for her leadership in bringing us together today, and all of my colleagues, on the one hand the Homeland Security and the Minister of the Interior and, of course, my colleagues from Commerce and Industry.

This has been a tremendous amount of work since our three leaders initiated this process in Waco, Texas on March 23rd, and I can say that it shows the commitment and it shows the determination to continue to build the most prosperous and secure area in the world. I also want to recognize the work of the staff. There has been a lot of work done and we are just getting started.

The people of the United States, Canada and Mexico today have a trading relationship that is worth over \$700 billion. That number has grown. From the period of 1993 to 2003, that number has grown by 88 per cent. So we have a lot of jobs and a lot of prosperity tied to this very important trading relationship. We want to build on that and continue to drive it forward and continue to grow it for the benefit of citizens in all three countries.

First, the security environment and economic progress depend on each other. No market economy can thrive without safety and security for its people. The threats we face require seamless cooperation that extends beyond borders.

Second, we won't be competitive in the global economy unless our region is competitive. That means regional integration, and that means regional cooperation. No country can reach its full potential by sailing alone into what is clearly more and more a global economic system. By strengthening our neighbors we strengthen ourselves. Success in the 21st century global economy demands regional strength. That is the framework that we are discussing here today.

So think of this agenda as a blueprint to secure North American leadership in the global economy. We have a plan to make North America the best place in the world in which to do business and, importantly, the best place in the world in which to create jobs.

We are already making progress on a number of fronts. We are signing a Framework of Common Principles for E-Commerce. We agreed to streamline regulation. We need to test products once and sell them in all three markets. We agreed to simplify trade flows. We will cooperate to make air transportation, energy, steel, automotive manufacturing and other economic sectors more competitive.

Finally, establishing protections for intellectual property rights is one of the most important steps we can take. We will develop a joint strategy to stamp out piracy and counterfeiting. We will preserve creativity, defend the public health and safety and protect our economic development.

That is also very important, and we call that making North America a fake-free zone of the world. We can really lead the world in terms of intellectual property rights.

We understand that this partnership is only the beginning. Our ultimate goal is to speed the secure movement of our people, goods and services across our borders and to eliminate barriers to trade, investment, research and education.

North America will be ready to lead in the 21st century and we believe that we are on the way to making this, without question, the best place in the world to live, the best place in the world in which to do business, and the most secure place in the world.

I again want to thank my colleagues for their leadership in this endeavor. Thank you.

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SECRETARY CANALES (Interpreted from Spanish): Muchas gracias. I would like to thank the Canadian authorities and the people of Canada for being the host for this extremely important meeting between the three member countries of North America, the United States, Canada and Mexico.

I would also like to thank the delegations made up of men and women in the business field from our three countries.

Our countries wanted, a number of years ago, to associate themselves in a free trade agreement. Through trade and investment we have, over the last 12 years, had a very positive result, not without difficulties, true, but we have gone and attained positive results for the people of Mexico, of North America, the United States and Canada. The growth has been more proportional because of their freeing up of trade and flows of investment.

In March of this year, the three leaders met and decided to give an impetus to our Free Trade Agreement. Today we are submitting this report with two main elements, as explained, security, which is a sine qua non element to promote development, and prosperity, from the general sense of the word, to be able to have a better quality of life.

We have worked with a great deal of energy and we shall be doing this in the coming years also. It is an ongoing task. It is an instrument of communication and coordination between the governments, the protective sectors and the business areas of our three countries.

Nothing in North America is attained without work. It is not attained free. It is the culture of North America and their sincere conviction of working hard work.

In the field of economics and prosperity, there are three basic established goals: make North America the best place to do business. It is not the only region in the world. There are many other regions. They are demonstrating what can be done when there is the will to do something. We want to be the best with concrete and punctual programs. Amongst others, the facilitation, harmonization of standards and laws to increase our economic activities.

Second, a sectoral coordination to improve competition and competitiveness. Over the years there has been integration over the countries of the automobile industry and steel industry for example. Many other industrial sectors may also integrate by availing themselves of the primary commodities, technological resources and human resources that are in one or all three countries of North America; and be able to produce for the general well being and the supply of North America and the world; facilitation of trade and the integration of industrial sectors.

As well as a large human content, this economic stimulus will give us the best quality of life in North America and in the world besides security and economic development, health, education and culture. This is our challenge. The ability is in the work of the Mexicans, the Americans and the Canadians with very clear, punctual objectives.

The document which we are submitting to our leaders and to public opinion has a detailed explanation of the various agreements, activities, with time limits, so that we have a tremendous task to attain this in those time limits. We are accustomed to doing that in our three countries and it is the main instrument to attain development, total human development as we see it.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentleman. I call upon my colleague, Minister Emmerson, to speak of his ideas and his conclusions of this meeting.

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The Honourable David Emmerson, Minister of Industry: Thank you very much, Secretary Canales. Good morning, everybody.

The security and prosperity work plans that we are releasing today do represent a very important step forward in our trilateral relationship, but, as Secretary Gutierrez said, we need to remind ourselves that we are building on a very strong NAFTA foundation.

Our three countries form the largest trading block in the entire world. We account for over one-third of the world's gross domestic product. Over the past decade, trade among us has almost doubled. Canada's trade with the United States has continued to increase, now accounting for 80 per cent of Canadian exports. Over the same decade, Canada's trade with Mexico has increased by over 10 per cent per year.

Despite a few rough patches, NAFTA is working and North America is stronger because of it. But the rest of the world has not been standing still. Far from it. A booming China is changing the competitive landscape and causing the reconfiguration of global supply chains. India is not far behind. The European Union, despite recent setbacks, will continue to get bigger and stronger as an economic union. Countries that resist adaptation put their economic future at risk.

In this new world, our North America partnership is critical. Investors do not think in terms of investing in Mexico or the United States or in Canada, they think about investing in North America. But they only invest in North America if it is a competitive platform from which to compete in the global marketplace.

We have to move beyond thinking about our partnership in terms of the imports and exports to each other and with each other. We have to think in terms of a North American economic space, a common space in which our industries are closely linked by just-in-time supply chains, a space that is host to innovative clusters and networks and that ultimately delivers jobs, wealth and opportunity for the citizens of our three countries.

Here in Canada we often reference the fact that 80 per cent of our exports go to the U.S., but more relevant, and perhaps more telling, is that 40 per cent of our exports to the U.S. are intra-firm exports, exports between subsidiaries of the same company. A further large percentage is between companies that are deeply integrated into trans-border supply chains.

We also know that increasingly growth is driven by economic clusters that rely on thin, if not seamless, geographic borders. The automotive and auto-part sector in Windsor, Detroit is a great example. Whether we are talking about space technologies, chemicals, or our growing hydrogen industry, we need borders that are friendly to business success and unfriendly to threats to our collective health and security.

NAFTA provided an important first step, but now we have to take our game to the next level. We need to eliminate transportation bottlenecks. We need to eliminate the small regulatory and other barriers that hurt the development of innovative clusters and that add unnecessary costs to doing business in North America.

Through the Security and Prosperity Partnership that our leaders announced in March, we intend to accelerate that process. That is the goal of the work plans that we are releasing today. We will be eliminating rules of origin requirements on another \$30 billion of trade in goods. We will build on regulatory cooperation that in some cases already exists, and we will do it by putting a Regulatory Cooperation Agreement in place by 2007.

Our goal is to eliminate duplicative testing and the tyranny of small differences, but we remain unalterably committed to high standards of health and safety for our citizens.

Our goal is the joint realization of health, safety and well-being for our citizens, nothing less. We will be working together to protect intellectual property, because we know that that is the cornerstone of innovation. We will be promoting more sectoral cooperation in our key industries, such as autos and steel, because we understand the need to work together to address today's global competitive challenges.

We will pay particular attention to what I call "enabling sectors", such as information and communications, transportation and energy, because of the competitive ramifications that these sectors have across all industries in our countries.

One such initiative that we are announcing today is an E-Commerce Framework Agreement that will promote electronic commerce while addressing issues of privacy and consumer protection.

We understand prosperity in the broadest sense of the term. Improvements in food safety, public health and the environment, not only add to the quality of life, but also have important economic implications. By bringing innovative thinking to these issues, we do create win-win opportunities for the economy and the environment and the health of our citizens.

Much has been accomplished over the last 90 days, but now comes the time to turn plans into action. The payoff will come from implementing the initiatives announced today. We continue to need our stakeholders -- many are in this room today - to challenge us with new ideas and advice that will ensure that these initiatives are successful. We will need to hold ourselves accountable in terms of progress in advancing this important agenda.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all of you, because it was you private sector stakeholders, business groups, NGOs, consumer groups who have been a driving force. You have been the thorn in our side and the wind at our back and we have responded.

As we go forward, new issues, new priorities will need to be added to our agenda. Driving the competitiveness of North America is not a one-shot deal, it is a constant perpetual challenge in a game where playing conditions never stay the same. As partners, we must work together to make sure that North America adapts, evolves and succeeds. Our people expect no less. Thank you very much.

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#### PRESS QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. A question from Reuters News Agency for Anne McLellan. The document here talks about negotiating terrorists, screening information agreements, it talks about developing benchmarks, of visa processing. What happens in a case of a disagreement? What happens if Canada feels that visitors from country "X" should be treated one way and the Americans feel differently? What happens if you consider a certain group to be dangerous and the Americans don't or vice versa? How do you settle the differences in such a way that it doesn't look as though Canada is being steamrolled by someone else?

A. Deputy Prime Minister McLellan: Well, first of all, we settle most of our differences through ongoing discussion and dialogue. Let me say that we have enjoyed an outstanding relationship with the United States, both with Secretary Ridge and now with Secretary Chertoff, and with other members of the U.S. administration and, dare I say, with the President and the Prime Minister. So that in fact most of these issues are dealt with through shared objectives and through dialogue and discussion.

As you are aware, for example, we have certain visa-exempt countries that the United States requires visas for. What we want to do is make sure that we have in place a policy where we are working together, where we are talking to each other and we understand each other's challenges. For example, around this question of visa requirements: What are the concerns in relation to country "X" and do our two countries -- and dare I say our three countries -- share those concerns and how do we want to move forward together?

We have done a lot of work, especially in the visa area. Our two countries, since September the 11th, have worked very hard in that area and have shared a lot of useful information and are coming much closer together in terms of our overall policy as it relates to visa exemption.

I do not anticipate that we will run into any major problems. We have so far been very successful in acknowledging each other's needs, our similarities, and in some cases our differences. That is how we will continue to work.

Q. Secretary Chertoff, I wanted to ask you, sir, about trying to get a movement of people back and forth in North America, particularly between Canada and the United States. We do have the NEXUS system, but in the United States Congress there has been a lot of talk about having a biometric card that would make it much simpler, much more secure for North Americans to be going back and forth. What stage are we at in developing a biometric card for our North American perimeter?

A. Secretary Chertoff: Well, I think it is absolutely right that the way forward ultimately, not just with respect to North America but with respect to the world, is biometrics. Biometrics give us the capacity to move beyond names, which is the most simple and primitive way of identifying, into something that is much more secure and much more specific and actually eliminates a lot of false positives.

What we want to do moving forward is build a compatible interoperable set of chips and documents that would allow us to essentially assimilate all of these various programs to a single trust to travel approach.

Ultimately, I think as we look out across the entire world - we have been dealing with the Europeans on the visa waiver issue, for example - we are looking to having passports that also incorporate a common biometric standard that is interoperable and interchangeable.

My bottom line message on biometrics is this: Biometrics not only enhance security, but they enhance privacy, because what they do is they guarantee people that they can control their identity with something that can't be changed or forged or counterfeited. It's something that we in government can rely upon, but also something that gives private citizens the assurances that they need that their identity is unique and will be protected against the kinds of misuse and theft that we unfortunately read about increasingly in the last few months.

Q. (Translated from Spanish). This question it is for the representatives of the United States and Canada. I would like to know if this region is so homogenous why it was not included and this time it will be included of compensatory funds to reduce the economic gap between Mexico and the United States and Canada?

A. Secretary Gutierrez: We have had a lot of discussion about -- I believe you are talking about the compensation for specific cases that we have. There are cases in U.S. courts of law I believe that we have made the position of the U.S. pretty clear from the standpoint that we believe that any agreement or any settlement of any of the cases that are alive today should be prospective. That is a position that we have taken and that is something that we believe is very important for any settlement.

Minister Emmerson: Let me just say that I am a believer that economic prosperity diffused throughout North America is probably your best remedy for poverty wherever it exists. We understand Canada is a country that feels the effects of global competition. There are adjustments. There are transformations that are necessary. We all, as governments, have an obligation to support our industries to ensure that they are able to transform, that workers are able to get the training and the support that they need to succeed in this marketplace.

A lot of the issues that are out there that are irritants, as Secretary Gutierrez has said, are tied up in legal actions. We have made it a point in this exercise not to allow ourselves to get drawn into those kinds of problems, but rather to be much more forward-looking in terms of preventing some of the disputes and the difficulties that we have seen in the past.

That's what this is all about. It is about paving the way for a smooth long-term road to prosperity for all three countries.

Q. (Interpreted from Spanish): Good morning. It is for Secretary Chertoff. In Mexico we have had an increased violence due to drug trafficking to the United States. I would like to know if the United States -- if it is also a problem of national security for you? What kind of impact this drug trafficking violence on the border of Mexico-U.S. occurs in that region? Are you going to take any specific measures to assist Mexico to bring an end to this violence? Also, to Minister Abascal, what commitments does Mexico take vis-à-vis the United States to try and control this violence that is due to drug trafficking in North America?

A. Secretary Chertoff: Well, both drug trafficking and trafficking in humans are aspects of organized crime and they present challenges not only to the United States but to the Mexican people as well because they bring with them violence. They bring with them destruction and death. So I think we have a common interest in dealing with the issue of organized crime as it manifests itself in drug trafficking and human trafficking organizations.

I am delighted to say that we actually have had a very good working relationship with the Mexican government sharing intelligence and sharing resources and targeting these organizations. We have discussed, as part of this ongoing initiative, further increasing the way in which we are able to work to get to the target organizations. That means sharing of intelligence, sharing of technical resources, operating in a coordinated fashion, so that when there is an enforcement operation on the Mexican side of the border we are taking appropriate steps on our side to make sure people are not trying to escape by coming north.

We have had some very good experiences in the last few months precisely working on these joint efforts. We look forward to continuing to do that in the future. We have also been able to work with our Canadian counterparts on joint border enforcement operations and some of the techniques we have used in dealing with issues that cross the Canadian border are techniques we will be using on criminal issues across the Mexican and American border.

A. Secretary Abascal (Interpreted from Spanish): We have been working with the United States over a number of years in a joint effort to strengthen security at our borders. The undertaking that Mexico has is to maintain that ongoing effort to eliminate organized crime, in particular in what is commonly called drug trafficking, migrant smuggling. These crimes are, by definition, international ones.

The relationship that we have with the Governments of the United States of America and Canada are excellent. There is ongoing collaboration where we exchange information to coordinate activities and actions and to implement shared strategies that enable us to have success in fighting these types of crimes.

It is important to highlight that this type of violence and that coming from drug trafficking comes from the clear commitment of President Fox not to deal with organized crime but to face them and to eliminate this scourge, this cancer for our societies, and what it all implies, that drug trafficking, for them. In the United States we have seen a great will to make this particular effort for the citizens of both our nations. Thank you.

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MODERATOR: Muchos gracias. Thank you very much. This ends the question and answer session, ladies and gentlemen.